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SERVICE DATE - SEPTEMBER 3, 2004

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

STB Docket NO. AB-33 (Sub-No. 213X)

**Union Pacific Railroad Company—Abandonment Exemption—
in Dallas County, IA**

BACKGROUND

In this proceeding, the Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) has filed a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 seeking exemption from the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903 to abandon a line of railroad known as the Perry Subdivision extending from milepost 296.8 near Waukee, IA, to milepost 275.9 (Equation milepost $275.9 = 361.8$) near Perry, IA, and from milepost 361.8 to milepost 369.0 near Dawson, IA, a total distance of 28.1 miles in Dallas County, IA. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to the report. If the exemption becomes effective, the railroad will be able to salvage track, ties and other railroad appurtenances, and to dispose of the right-of-way.

DESCRIPTION OF THE LINE

According to UP, the four shippers have used the line over the past 2 years are Farmers Cooperative (Farmers); Heartland Coop (Heartland), Tyson Fresh Meats (Tyson) and Quebecor World (Quebecor). UP states that Farmers shipped 4 cars of Potash (STCC 28125) for 396 tons and 46 cars of Superphosphate (STCC 28712) for 4517 tons in 2002. Farmers shipped 32 cars of Superphosphate for 3151 tons in 2003. From January through March, 2004, Farmers had no shipments. Heartland shipped 18 cars of Potash STCC 28125) for 1801 tons, and 2 cars of Superphosphate (STCC 28712) for 2588 tons in 2002. In 2003, Heartland shipped 10 cars of Potash for 1000 tons, 17 cars of Superphosphate for 1687 tons, and 50 cars of Ammoniating Fertilizers (STCC 28713) for 4851 tons. From January through March, 2004, Heartland shipped 3 cars of Potash for 300 tons. Tyson shipped 72 cars of meats (STCC 20129) for 4052 tons, 63 cars of Lard (STCC 20131) for 5515 tons, and 3 cars of Tallow (STCC 20143) for 266 tons in 2002. In 2003, Tyson shipped 61 cars of Meats for 3417 tons, 26 cars of Lard for 2298 tons, 24 cars of Tallow for 2094 tons, and 1 car of Meat Bone (STCC 20149) for 46 tons. From January through March, 2004, Tyson Shipped 9 cars of Meats for 476 tons, 6 cars of Lard for 529 tons, and 3 cars of Tallow for 266 tons. Quebecor had no shipments in 2002, 1 car of Newsprint (STCC 26211) for 54 tons in 2003, and no shipments from January through March, 2004.

The line contains no federally granted right-of-way and consists of 268.106 acres of reversionary property and 138.46 acres of non-reversionary property. The line is generally 100 feet in width, is adjacent to fair to good agricultural land, and passes thorough several small towns. The topography varies from level to hilly.

UP states that the section of the line from milepost 296.8 to milepost 275.9 was constructed by the Des Moines Valley Railroad in 1869-1870. It is laid with 85-pound jointed rail. The section from milepost 361.8 (the equation point with milepost 275.9) to milepost 369.0 was constructed by the Milwaukee St. Paul and Pacific Railroad, date unknown, and is laid with 112-pound jointed rail. UP states that the traffic which has been generated recently at the stations of Waukee, Minburn, and Perry, is insufficient to support the expenses of day-to-day operations. According to UP, the shippers on the line either support or will not protest the proposed abandonment and there are no known expected shippers on the line.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

UP submitted an environmental report that concludes the quality of the human environment will not be affected significantly as a result of the abandonment or any post abandonment activities, including salvage and disposition of the right-of-way. UP served the environmental report on a number of appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies as required by the Surface Transportation Board's environmental rules at 49 CFR 1105.7(b). Also, consultations have been made with appropriate agencies and individuals to verify the railroad's report and to obtain additional information and comments regarding the potential environmental effects of the proposed abandonment. Contacts have included: Dallas County Board of Supervisors; Department of Natural Resources; Farmers Cooperative; Heartland Coop; Iowa Department of Economic Development; Iowa Department of Transportation; Military Traffic Management Command, Transportation Engineering Agency, Attention: Railroads for National Defense; National Geodetic Survey; Quebecor World; State Historical Society of Iowa; National Park Service; Tyson Fresh Meats; U.S. Army Engineer District - Rock Island; U.S. Department of Agriculture, Chief of the Forest Service; U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VII; U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 3; and the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The National Geodetic Survey (NGS) has submitted comments stating that 8 geodetic station markers have been identified that may be affected by the proposed abandonment. NGS states that if there are any planned activities which will disturb or destroy these makers, NGS requires not less than 90 days notification in advance of such activities in order to plan for their relocation.

Assuming a yearly volume of 131 railcar loads and a truck to rail car ratio of four to one, the proposed abandonment might result in 1048 additional loaded and empty trucks on area roads in the course of a year, or slightly over four per working day assuming a 250 workday year. This should have a minimal impact on area traffic patterns.

HISTORIC REVIEW

UP submitted a historic report as required by the Surface Transportation Board's environmental rules [49 CFR 1105.8(a)]. UP served the report on the State Historical Society of Iowa to the attention of R&C Coordinator pursuant to 49 CFR 1105.8(c). The SHPO has not yet completed its review of the proposed abandonment.

According to UP, it provided SHPO with 8 original photographs of the bridge at milepost 363.50, which is over 50 years old.

CONDITIONS

We recommend the following environmental conditions be placed on any decision granting abandonment authority.

1. The National Geodetic Survey(NGS) has identified 8 geodetic station markers that may be affected by the proposed abandonment. Therefore, UP shall notify NGS 90 days prior to salvage activities in order to plan for their relocation.
2. The State Historical Society of Iowa has not yet completed its review of the proposed abandonment. Therefore, we recommend that the following condition be imposed on any decision granting abandonment authority: UP shall retain its interest in and take no steps to alter the historic integrity of all sites and structures on the right-of-way that are 50 years old or older until completion of the section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 470f.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information provided from all sources to date, we conclude that, as currently proposed, and if the recommended conditions are imposed, abandonment of the line will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the environmental impact statement process is unnecessary.

Alternatives to the proposed abandonment would include denial (and, therefore no change in operations), discontinuance of service without abandonment, and continued operation by another operator. In this case, the existing quality of the human environment and energy consumption should not be affected.

PUBLIC USE

If abandonment and salvage of the rail line does not take place, the right-of-way may be suitable for other public use. A request containing the requisite four-part showing for imposition of a public use condition (49 CFR 1152.28) must be filed with the Board and served on the railroad within the time specified in the Federal Register notice.

TRAILS USE

A request for a notice of interim trail use (NITU) is due to the Board, with a copy to the railroad, within 10 days of publication of the petition for exemption in the Federal Register. Nevertheless, the Board will accept late-filed requests as long as it retains jurisdiction to do so in a particular case. This request must comply with the Board's rules for use of rights-of-way as trails (49 CFR 1152.29).

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

The Board's Office of Public Services responds to questions regarding interim trail use, public use, and other reuse alternatives. You may contact the Office of Public Services directly at (202) 565-1592, or mail inquiries to Surface Transportation Board, Office of Public Services, Room 848, Washington, DC 20423.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMENTS

If you wish to file comments regarding this environmental assessment, send an **original and two copies** to Surface Transportation Board, Case Control Unit, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Ann Newman, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Environmental comments may also be filed electronically on the Board's web site, www.stb.dot.gov, by clicking on the "E-Filing" link. Please refer to Docket No. AB-33 (Sub-No. 213X) in all correspondence, including e-mail filings, addressed to the Board. If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Ann Newman at (202) 565-1657, fax at (202) 565-9000, or e-mail at Newman@stb.dot.gov.**

Date made available to the public: September 3, 2004.

Comment due date: October 4, 2004.

By the Surface Transportation Board, Victoria Rutson, Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis.

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

Attachment

ID # 34900

